
REVIEWING THE JUDICIARY'S SPACE PROGRAM

The Judiciary is in the process of engaging an outside consultant to conduct a comprehensive study of its space and facilities program by early 2000. The purpose of this review is to obtain an independent assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Judiciary's building program and recommendations for future facilities planning, budgeting, and management.

This top-to-bottom review will examine program statutes, goals, policies, standards, and guidelines; planning practices and assumptions; courtroom utilization rates and policies; budgeting and funding mechanisms; building design policies; furniture acquisition policies; facilities management practices; and program costs. The study will include input from Judiciary officials, Congress, the General Services Administration, the Office of Management and Budget, and other interested parties.

The Judiciary initiated this study due to the program's large size, significant importance, and challenging management factors. With over 800 locations nationwide, courthouse facilities are critical to the Judiciary's ability to serve the public effectively. The program faces the need to provide space due to continued workload increases, a growing work force, and changing building security and operational requirements. Complex inter-branch and intra-branch relationships and responsibilities, federal budget constraints, and uncertainties inherent in long range planning make this a complicated program.

The study should produce recommendations to improve planning processes and reduce future costs, adding to cost avoidances realized in recent years. In fiscal year 1998, the Judiciary released over 40,000 square feet of space, saving over half a million dollars annually. This adds to reductions of over 600,000 square feet to planned and existing space, with corresponding rent savings of over \$13 million, in fiscal years 1996 and 1997.